

THE
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. III.

BOSTON, AUGUST 2, 1841.

No. 15.

LETTERS FROM A TEACHER TO HER YOUNG FEMALE FRIEND, JUST
ABOUT COMMENCING TO KEEP SCHOOL.

No. X.

My dear L—: In order to present to your pupils the most striking view possible of the general outline and aspect of the eastern continent, we will pass, at once, from the rich valleys of North and South America, to the barren and burning deserts of Asia and Africa, which occupy the same latitudes on the opposite side of the globe. The chief cause of the difference between these two hemispheres is the different degree in which the respective tracts of country are watered. The most singular region on the surface of the globe,—one which acts a most important part in the economy of the earth's surface, by diffusing its great heats over all neighboring countries,—contains neither river nor mountain; and it is said there is nothing which can be called a rock, or even a large stone, either on its surface or for some depth below it. This region is the Desert of Sahara, in Upper Africa, which averages in extent about 3000 miles from east to west, and 1000 from north to south, containing nearly as many square miles as the whole of Europe. It is not wholly destitute of water, for there are occasional patches of green, resembling islands, fertilized by stagnant pools, and even by fresh springs; but they are more inaccessible than any islands of the ocean, being surrounded by sands so oppressively hot, that animals created for that climate alone can with safety traverse them. The enterprise and the cupidity of man lead him across such trackless deserts, it is true, but it is always at a risk of life apparently greater than any other to which he is subject; for the winds, that sweep furiously over these deserts, often raise the burning sands, in such quantities, that travellers are, at any time, liable to be buried beneath them; and so great are the sufferings occasioned by drought, that the camels, which serve as beasts of burden, are frequently killed, for the sake of the pure water which they carry in a sort of second stomach, kindly provided by all-bountiful Nature for their emergencies in these parched regions. Such vast accumulations of sand as the Desert of Sahara, and many other deserts of Africa and Asia, must be considered as *ruins*, which have been produced in the slow process of time, and not by any sudden convulsions of nature. The volcano and the lightning break mountains and rocks into pieces, but they do not grind them to powder; earthquakes crumble them, and the ocean rounds the fragments into perfect smoothness, but they

do not reduce them to sand. Nothing but the untiring action of the weather upon the surfaces of rocks,—the alternate operations of wetting and drying,—can account for their entire decomposition. We know nothing of the process which first converted Sahara into an arid desert; but, in some parts of India, the action of nature is so powerful that, if man ceases to practise his arts of culture for even a very short time, the memorials of himself and his works are completely obliterated. I quote these facts from Mr. Mudie, who goes on to say that, “if the country is so situated that the periodical rains can reach it, man and his memorials are blotted out by the power of vegetation; and the bamboo jungle, rising to the height of sixty feet in a single year, and bristling with spires, which are almost as formidable as the bayonets of armies, first conceal his dwelling, and then give up the remains of it to the leopard, the snake, and the bat. If, however, the rains do not reach the country, the change would be of a very different character; vegetation would soon cease, and, in brief, large tracts of ere-while fertile ground would be turned into unproductive deserts. There are many of the higher districts of Southern India, upon which it would be altogether impossible to obtain crops, except by means of artificial watering, often from wells which require to be sunk to the depth of two or three hundred feet; and we have only to conceive a stop put to the labors of man in such a country, in order to imagine how a desert might be begun in it. This desert, once begun, would extend very rapidly, and the more so, the warmer the climate, and the wider the region.” When beaten upon by the heat of the sun, especially where he is vertical, or nearly so, as between and near the tropics, the sand or rocks become intensely hot; and, in consequence of this heat, the air over them becomes heated, and continually ascends, like the smoke of a furnace, while that from every side moves in to take its place; but, becoming hotter as it approaches, instead of parting with any of the moisture with which it is laden, it ascends, in its turn, to the upper regions of the atmosphere, bearing its moisture with it, to let it fall upon distant and cooler places. Such is the progress of desert formation, in those regions of Africa and Asia which are not well watered, and where mountain ranges cut off the lands from the action of the great currents of air and moisture which circulate round the globe.

The mountains north of the Great Desert cut it off from what is called the basin of the Mediterranean Sea, which comprises not only the waters of the Mediterranean itself, but those of the Red Sea, the Baltic, the Caspian, the Aral, and all their tributary streams, and which occupies the whole region lying between 10° and 60° of north latitude, and from 10° west to 70° east longitude;—and, on the south, the Mountains of the Moon stretch from Sierra Leone nearly to Abyssinia. No vapors reach it, therefore, from the north or the south; and the few showers that fall on its borders only produce more rapid evaporation, and consequent disintegration of surface rocks.

In Southern and Central Africa, of which latter little is known, except by inferences drawn from the courses of its rivers, other mountain ranges doubtless interrupt the natural action of the two seas; and, at any rate, the fact of their great dryness is strong evidence that they have their deserts, like Karroo, in which the rivers are often lost in the

sand. Karroo lies below the Orange River. Between this river and the foot of the Snow Mountains, is a tract, 300 miles long and 80 broad, formed of hard clay, seldom moistened by a shower, and perfectly uninhabitable.

Beyond the Sea of Aral, which may be called the eastern extremity of the great Mediterranean basin, two lofty *double* mountain ridges, the exterior one being the highest, enclose another immense tract, which is cut off from the action of currents by these great heights, their summits being covered with perpetual snow, so that no vapor can pass over them from more favored regions. This tract stretches 2000 or 3000 miles to the north-east, and is 1000 miles in average breadth; it is called the *table land* of Asia, the general level being nearly two miles above that of the sea, and it consists, as far as it is known, of dry, barren soil, destitute of all kinds of herbage. No rivers of any magnitude rise within the mountain borders; but there are a few streams, which, having no outlet, and flowing over saline rocks, terminate in small, salt lakes that only add to the desolation of the scene. The great Altai chain separates this tract of desert country from Siberia, and large rivers flow from it across the northern slope to the Frozen Ocean. The northern exposure of Siberia renders it the coldest country in the world, and the rivers, in their sluggish course, grow colder and colder, expanding occasionally into lakes of a singularly wild character.

From the Himalaya mountains, on the south of Tartary, rivers of immense volume flow over rich and fertile countries to the Indian Ocean. Arabia forms an exception in this southern tract of country, being nearly occupied by an extensive, sandy region, varied, however, by occasional tracts and patches of beautiful fertility. East of the Indus, also, a desert extends from the coast nearly to the mountains which separate India from Tartary. In Australia, or New Holland, as it was formerly called,—an island containing nearly as many square miles as Europe,—the greater part of the north-west coast is dry and barren. Thus, on the other side of the Indian Ocean, we see a region, on the same parallel with Southern Africa, equal in extent to the table land of Asia, and bearing the same general character.

I have not spoken of the mountains of Europe. They occupy chiefly the middle and southern region of this quarter of the globe, stretching across Austria, Switzerland, and France, and southerly into Turkey, Italy, and Spain. Russia is low and marshy, watered with sluggish rivers, and separated from Siberia by a spur of the great Altai chain, running north-west to the Frozen Ocean. Around the Baltic, a decided slope from every direction conducts the waters of many rivers to that sea; and another range of lofty heights bounds the ocean in Norway and Britain. It is supposed that the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Baltic, united their waters, at some remote period,—there being strong evidences, from geological observations, that Europe, in its present aspect, is the union of many islands, of various dimensions, into the solid continent of the present day. No portion of this quarter of the earth presents desert wastes of sand; but, on some of the mountain heights in the north, which rise nearly into the region of perpetual frost, where the rocks are nightly exposed to its action, even many of the hardest, like porphyry, are broken by the con-

stant freezing and thawing, and lie crumbled around,—thus showing the early processes of decay, which, in the course of ages, will level these mountains with the surrounding plains. But, in Europe, every circumstance favors the growth of vegetation upon the ruins, instead of a disintegration into sandy deserts. On comparing Europe and Africa, it is found that more water is poured into the northern and western part of the Black Sea, from the Danube to the Don, than the whole southern portion of Africa, from the mouths of the Niger on the west, round to the mouths of the Nile on the north-east, (a distance of 8000 or 9000 miles,) discharges into the ocean. In Central America, the action of the Atlantic and Pacific is confined to small tracts on their respective shores, the table land of Mexico being sheltered by lofty ranges of mountains; and here the discoveries of ancient cities, half buried in the sand, point out a similar process of nature to that observed in many parts of Asia and Africa. This view of the physical structure of the globe gives us a more vivid sense of the changes of empires, the rise and fall of nations, than any historical records we yet possess of the race of man. The luxuriance of vegetation on the small oases, or islands, of the deserts, and the ruins of ancient art, still found half buried in the sand, quicken our imaginations to figure forth a time when the north of Africa may have been the garden of the world. We cannot estimate what a change the slow formation of such deserts may have produced in the very powers of nature, in that region,—thus aiding the work of destruction in an ever-increasing ratio,—nor what changes may yet be produced on other portions of our globe.

Thus, from our balloon, we see that the great valleys of the eastern and western hemispheres range in different directions. Those of America, opening to the north and south, give to tropical heats and polar colds an opportunity to exert their reciprocal influence through the whole of the western continent. The whole eastern hemisphere, on the contrary, may be said to be cleft by the desert valleys of Sahara and the table land of Asia,—the various but connected chains of mountains that bound them on either side, bearing the same general relation to each other as the Rocky and Andes Mountains in America bear to the Alleghanies and their southern continuation.

The immense advantages the western hemisphere has over the eastern, cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that every portion of it is in lively communication, by the aid of its rivers and the connection of its larger and smaller valleys,—while many parts of the old world still remain shut out from each other, and locked in a mystery which only the enterprise of the new-born western world is likely to penetrate, even at a distant future day.

The beautiful provisions of nature, exemplified in the height of the mountain ranges in tropical regions, should be pointed out and dwelt upon, in connection with this survey of the earth. The snowy peaks of the wonderful Himmalaya of Asia, of the Central Mountains of Africa, and the Andes of South America and Mexico, alone render those countries habitable; for we see that even the rotatory motion of the earth, which snatches every portion of the surface from the intense rays of the tropical sun, would not be a sufficient protection from its burning influence, if its surface did not rise into the cooler regions of the

atmosphere. It is said to have been proved, by calculation, that, if the earth did not move on its axis, the vertical rays of the sun would turn into vapor any substance on its surface, and even the mass of the earth itself, in an incredibly short time. Thus we could not enjoy the influence of such a sun as ours, under any other circumstances than those which exist; and this is one of the many instances in which we are made to feel the wisdom of the Creator. Indeed, the further we investigate nature, and see the bearings of natural causes, the more reason we find to adore its Author, and to admire the adaptations of every part of His creation to every other part.

The next survey of the earth should be of the basins of its rivers and lakes, which will be a fruitful theme. M.

[For the Common School Journal.]

NOTICES OF ENGLISH GRAMMARS.

No. IV.

(x.)

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D., F. R. S. London; 1762.

Priestley's Grammar is a production of little merit, and much of its celebrity is to be attributed to the literary fame of the author.

His analysis of the verb is exceedingly defective. He uses no such term as *mode*, and has but two tenses,—the present and the preter or past tense. The "compound forms" of the verb he divides into three distinct classes or orders, according as the auxiliary verbs that constitute them require the *radical form*, the *participle present*, or the *participle preterite*, to be joined with them; and again into "*single, double, and triple*, according as *one, two, or three* auxiliary verbs are made use of." He also asserts that we have no more business with a future tense, in our language, than we have with the whole system of Latin moods and tenses.

The Critical Notes and Observations which are appended to this work constitute its principal excellence; but they relate to the more difficult parts of the subject, and were not intended for the use of ordinary learners in school.

(xi.)

ROBERT LOWTH, D. D., F. R. S. London; 1763.

Lowth's celebrated Introduction to English Grammar was first published anonymously, and intended, as the author tells us in his preface, "merely for a private and domestic use;" but it soon came into general notice, and has probably exerted more influence than any other treatise in forming the character of the numerous Grammars that have since been used as school books, in Great Britain and the United States. Dr. Webster says, that "Wallis and Lowth are the two ablest writers on English Grammar."

The author "sometimes preferred easiness and perspicuity to logical exactness," and he has been frequently censured by critics for the looseness which this preference occasioned in many of his definitions. He generally "complied with the common divisions; and retained the known and received terms, except in one or two instances, where others offered themselves, which seemed much more significant." He

substituted the term *possessive* for *genitive*, but retained the terms *mood* and *time*, in preference to *mood* and *tense*.

In describing the noun, he introduces only two cases, the nominative and the possessive; but in his "Example of Grammatical Resolution," he makes frequent mention of the objective case. He has four modes,—the indicative, the imperative, the subjunctive, and the infinitive; and three tenses,—the present, the past, and the future.

The Critical Notes point out some of the prominent faults of English writers, and furnish a happy illustration of the principles contained in the body of the work.

Though "calculated for the use of learners, even of the lowest capacity," the arrangement of the subject is not well adapted to meet the wants of schools. Syntax is all included under the general head of "*Sentences*," and the prosody of the language is omitted.

Most of Lowth's definitions have been copied, verbatim, by Lindley Murray, and again from Murray, by scores of later compilers of less note.

This Grammar is still used, as a text-book, in Harvard University, and a beautiful edition of it has lately been issued by the Cambridge press.

(XII.)

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

The Grammar prefixed to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, was published soon after the appearance of Lowth's Introduction. It has many deficiencies, and cannot be regarded as a complete system of English grammar. The whole of syntax is brought within the compass of a dozen lines; because, as the learned author tells us, "our language has so little inflection or variety of terminations, that its construction neither requires nor admits many rules." It is remarkable, that no mention is made of prepositions, conjunctions, or interjections, though the other parts of speech are all presented in detail.

The following extract from the work is introduced for the consideration of certain innovators of our own time: "I use the terms already received, and already understood, though perhaps others more proper might sometimes be invented. Sylburgius, and other innovators, whose new terms have sunk their learning into neglect, have left sufficient warning against the trifling ambition of teaching arts in a new language."

(XIII.)

JOHN ASH, LL. D. London.

An imperfect edition of Ash's Grammar was printed before the publication of Lowth's; but it was afterwards greatly modified, and published as "*An Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar*." With all its improvements, it is still a small affair;—an "Introduction" to an "Introduction,"—an abridgment of a work that did not itself profess to give a complete view of the grammar of the language.

(XIV.)

WILLIAM WARD, M. A. London; 1765.

Ward's Grammar appeared at different times, in a variety of forms, and under several different titles. One edition was published at

London, one at York, and one at Northampton. The author was a teacher by profession, and his work, which he tells us was "the product of much trial, and practice, and experience," was intended to meet the actual wants of schools. He was, however, strongly inclined to the old system of instruction, and used his influence to revive many useless terms which had been rejected by Wallis and Lowth.

The rules of syntax are first expressed in verse, and then repeated in prose. The general arrangement of the work is commendable, but many of the definitions are so constructed as to be of little service to a learner who is just commencing the study of English grammar. One or two quotations will illustrate this remark.

"*Verbs* denote states of being, considered as beginning, continuing, ending, being renewed, destroyed, and again repeated, so as to suit any occasion."

"*Prepositions* are notices to apply certain connective operations of the mind to the conceptions denoted by substantives, so as to derive from them conceptions of circumstances merely coalescent; i. e., of such as will unite with objects and verbal states, without encrease of number."

The author prefixed to the third edition of this work an article of some merit, entitled "An Account of the Principles of Grammar, as applied to the English Language."

(xv.)

JOHN BURN. Glasgow; 1766.

This is a duodecimo volume of two hundred and fifty pages. It is elementary and practical in its character, and the rules are illustrated by copious examples of true and false syntax.

The most prominent fault of this writer is his want of method. Etymology and syntax are confounded with each other, and many important definitions are found only by consulting the explanatory notes. It was, however, for a time, quite popular in the northern part of Great Britain, and passed through seven, or more, editions.

(xvi.)

JAMES BUCHANAN. 1767.

Buchanan's Grammar is a most egregious plagiarism. Without any direct acknowledgment in his preface, he has borrowed the plan of his work, with very little modification, from the British Grammar; and more than half of the volume is copied, verbatim, from that treatise. He has, however, made some valuable improvements upon the work to which he is so much indebted, and his Grammar was quite extensively circulated; both in England and America.

MR. EDITOR: Owing to the state of my health, and to indispensable engagements, I shall be obliged, for a short time, to suspend the preparation of further numbers. I hope, however, at a future period, to resume the work. W. H. W.

[We heartily regret our correspondent's inability to prosecute, without interruption, the work he has so well begun; and we earnestly hope he will soon be able to renew a labor which promises so much benefit to the community as that which he has undertaken.—Ed.]

[For the Common School Journal.]

ON THE SOUND OF THE LETTER R.

MR. EDITOR: I am the author of the article, in your journal, "*On the Sound of the Letter R*," (see *Common School Journal*, Vol. II., page 375,) which impugns the correctness of Mr. Russell's teaching, so far as it regards the sound of that letter. The last number of your Journal contains a reply, signed by Mr. Russell himself. In this reply, Mr. Russell repeatedly charges upon me, not only ignorance of the subject treated of, but both the incapacity, and the want of a desire, to be better informed. I spoke respectfully of Mr. Russell, and do not think that the cause of truth will be advanced by such personal imputations.

In Mr. Russell's "*Lessons in Enunciation*," p. 29, he directs that "*r* initial, or before a vowel," should be "*articulated by a forcible trill of the tongue*." In his communication, he says that if "*I had done what I ought to have done, I should have referred to acknowledged authorities*," before questioning the correctness of the above doctrine. What, then, say the lexicographers on the subject? Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, says, "*r* has one constant sound in English, as in *red, rose, more, muriatic*." In Todd's edition of Dr. Johnson, the same is repeated. Again, in the Dictionary by J. E. Worcester, (which I regard as the best for common use in our language,) it is said, "*r* has one constant sound in English." Noah Webster, speaking of the letter *r*, says, "*Its English uses, which are uniform*," (this is my underscoring, not his,) "*may be understood by the customary pronunciation of rod, rose, bar, bare, barren, brad, pride, drown*."

But it is averred that there are contrary authorities. Ben Jonson says, "*r* is sounded firm in the beginning of words, and more liquid in the middle and ends." Let me ask, by the way, if this is authority for or against the "*forcibly trilling*" of the *r*, before a vowel, where it comes in the middle of a word. Walker says, "*The rough r* is formed by jarring the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth near the fore teeth." Barber says, it must be sounded "*with a single slap of the tongue*." On these authorities, or rather on that of Walker, Mr. Russell says, it must be "*articulated with a forcible trill*." Now, a "*trill*" is not a "*firm sound*," according to Ben Jonson; and a jar or stroke of the tongue against the roof of the mouth will necessarily stop the trill, if it has been commenced; for a trill requires that the tip or end of the tongue should play freely. A trill necessarily increases the quantity of the letter trilled. It is a musical term, of definite signification; and every one who has noticed Mr. Russell's enunciation, or that of his followers, knows that he and they are as long in sounding an initial *r* as in sounding three or four common letters. I deny, then, that he has any authority for "*trilling*" the *r*, while there are numerous and high authorities against it. But Mr. Russell says, "*Care was taken in his 'Lessons,' on purpose, to avoid designating the hard r as a 'rolling' sound*." Yes, *this* care was taken. He says, it must not only be "*trilled*," but "*forcibly trilled*." A little more such care would have made it a long journey from the beginning of Mr. R.'s surname to the end of it. Under such a rule, before one could utter the name of the R-r-r-r-R-r-r-rubicon, Cæsar would pass it.

But, even if Walker had said any thing to justify or countenance Mr. Russell's views, yet does not the latter admit, in his "*Lessons*," that

Walker is not always to be followed? And does he not take the liberty, himself, at sundry times, to differ from that distinguished orthoëpist? Is it, then, either quite fair or quite civil to denounce one who differs from Walker, as an innovator or an ignoramus, especially when he has Johnson, and Webster, and Worcester, on his side?

But Mr. R. refers to the practice of the Boston schools. I have heard the pupils of these schools, (both public and private,) read, in school; and I have heard both them and their teachers speak, out of school. There is a great difference in these schools. In some of them, the reading is simple, unaffected, excellent; and in some of them, I have heard, not a "firm sound" of the *r* merely, nor a "jar," nor a "single slap of the tongue," but a "trilling," and a "forcible trilling," and such a prolonged, quavering, sonorous roll, that I have thought it would be almost a saving of time, instead of waiting for the enunciation of this letter, to have called in a drummer to beat the *reveillé*, at the beginning of each word to which it belonged. Mr. Russell would probably say that the reading of the Boston schools owes much of its *beauty* to this peculiarity. I would say, it is good, notwithstanding this *blemish*; and this is an opinion I have often heard expressed by gentlemen belonging to this and to other States.

But against Mr. Russell's views, I appealed to *reputable use*,—to the manner of sounding this letter by educated men; and I cited, amongst others, the illustrious names of Channing, Webster, and Everett. Mr. Russell coolly replies by saying, that, in regard to the manner in which these speakers sound the letter *r*, I "labor under a mistake, arising from the want of a discriminating ear." Now, this is a little too bad. Having myself practised, and, to some extent, taught music, for many years; having paid special attention, for more than a quarter of a century, to the subject of orthoëpy, and to the manner in which our distinguished and educated men are accustomed to speak; and having frequently heard the gentlemen whom I cited, speak, both in public and in private,—not one of whom ever duplicates or adds to the quantity of that letter;—to be now told by Mr. Russell, that they sustain his doctrine by their practice, that they speak as he speaks, and trill as he trills; and that the reason why I never have noticed the fact, "arises from the want of a discriminating ear," reminds me of an anecdote, which I lately saw in a Western paper. A backwoodsman conceived a violent grudge against an Indian. One day, he saw the Indian going into the woods, and followed him with his rifle. The Indian took off his frock, and began to climb a tree. His enemy waited until he got up fifteen or twenty feet, then fired, and brought him to the ground, seriously wounded. The Indian detected his foe, cited him to court, and testified to the injury and the perpetrator. The aggressor, being called upon for his defence, acknowledged the firing, but said that it was not done from malice, for that he verily believed the Indian to be a 'coon, and fired accordingly. "Well," said the Indian, "if, when you saw me climbing that tree, with a white woollen cap on my head, and in my red flannel shirt, you thought I was a 'coon, then I'm done." Now, if any man who ever heard these respective parties speak, will say that the sound of the letter *r*, as uttered by Webster, Channing, or Everett, coincides with, approximates to, or in the slightest degree resembles, Mr. Russell's brogue, then, I say with the Indian, "*I'm done*."

N. S. L.

EXTRACTS FROM AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE "THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA," MAY 11, 1841, "ON THE TENDENCY OF THE AGE TO UNIVERSALITY."

BY DR. WM. E. CHANNING.

I am reminded, by this remark, of the most striking feature of our time, and showing its tendency to universality; and that is, the unparalleled and constantly accelerated diffusion of Education. This greatest of arts, as yet little understood, is making sure progress, because its principles are more and more sought in the common nature of man; and the great truth is spreading that every man has a right to its aid. Accordingly, education is becoming the work of nations. Even in the despotic governments of Europe, schools are open for every child without distinction; and not only the elements of reading and writing, but music and drawing, are taught, and a foundation is laid for future progress in history, geography, and physical science. The greatest minds are at work on popular education. The revenues of States are applied most liberally, not to the universities for the few, but to the Common Schools. Undoubtedly much remains to be done; especially a new rank in society is to be given to the teacher; but, even in this respect, a revolution has commenced, and we are beginning to look on the guides of the young as the chief benefactors of mankind.

I thought that I had finished my illustrations on this point; but there has suddenly occurred to me another sign of the tendency to universal intellectual action in this country,—a sign which we are prone to smile at, but which is yet worthy of notice. I refer to the commonness among us of public speaking. If we may trust our newspapers, we are a nation of orators. Every meeting overflows with eloquence. Men of all conditions find a tongue for public debate. Undoubtedly, there is more sound than sense in our endless speeches before all kinds of assemblies and societies. But no man, I think, can attend our public meetings, without being struck with the force and propriety of expression in multitudes, whose condition has confined them to a very imperfect culture. This exercise of the intellect, which has almost become a national characteristic, is not to be undervalued. Speech is not merely the dress, as it is often called, but the very body of thought. It is to the intellect what the muscles are to the principle of physical life. The mind acts and strengthens itself through words. It is a chaos till defined, organized, by language. The attempt to give clear, precise utterance to thought, is one of the most effectual processes of mental discipline. It is, therefore, no doubtful sign of the growing intelligence of a people, when the power, of expression is cultivated extensively for the purpose of acting on multitudes. We have here one invaluable influence of popular institutions. They present, at the same moment, to a whole people, great subjects of thought, and bring multitudes to the earnest discussion of them. Here are, indeed, moral dangers, but still strong incitements to general intellectual action. It is in such stirring schools, after all, that the mind of a people is chiefly formed. Events of deep general interest quicken us more than formal teaching; and by these the civilized world is to be more and more trained to thought.

There are, however, not a few who have painful fears of evil from

the restless, earnest action, which we have seen spreading itself more and more through all departments of society. They call the age wild, lawless, presumptuous, without reverence. All men, they tell us, are bursting their spheres, quitting their ranks, aspiring selfishly after gain and preëminence. The blind multitude are forsaking their natural leaders. The poor, who are the majority, are contriving against the rich. Still more, a dangerous fanaticism threatens destruction to the world, under the name of *reform*; society totters; property is shaken; and the universal freedom of thought and action, of which so many boast, is the precursor of social storms, which only despotism can calm. Such are the alarms of not a few; and it is right that fear should utter its prophecies as well as hope. But it is the true office of fear to give a wise direction to human effort, not to chill or destroy it. To despair of the race, even in the worst times, is unmanly, unchristian. How much more so in times like the present! What I most lament in these apprehensions is, the utter distrust of human nature which they discover. Its highest powers are thought to be given only to be restrained. They are thought to be safe only when in fetters. To me, there is an approach to impiety in thinking so meanly of God's greatest work. Human nature is not a tiger, which needs a constant chain. In this case, it is the chain which makes the tiger. It is the oppressor who has made man fit only for a yoke.

When I look at the great movements of the age, particularly as manifested in our own country, they seem to me to justify no overwhelming fear. True, they are earnest and wide-spreading; but the objects to which they are directed are pledges against extensive harm. For example, ought the general diffusion of science, and literature, and thought, to strike dread? Do habits of reading breed revolt? Does the astronomer traverse the skies, or the geologist pierce the earth, to gather materials for assault on the social state? Does the study of Nature stir up rebellion against its Author? Is it the lesson which men learn from history, that they are to better their condition by disturbing the State? Does the reading of poetry train us to insurrection? Does the diffusion of a sense of beauty through a people, incline them to tumult? Are not works of genius and the fine arts, soothing influences? Is not a shelf of books in a poor man's house some pledge of his keeping the peace? It is not denied that thought, in its freedom, questions and assails the holiest truth. But is truth so weak, so puny, as to need to be guarded by bayonets from assault? Has truth no beauty, no might? Has the human soul no power to weigh its evidence, to reverence its grandeur? Besides, does not freedom of thought, when most unrestrained, carry a conservative power in itself? In such a state of things, the erring do not all embrace the same error. Whilst truth is one and the same, falsehood is infinitely various. It is a house divided against itself, and cannot stand. Error soon passes away, unless upheld by restraint on thought. History tells us,—and the lesson is invaluable,—that the physical force, which has put down free inquiry, has been the main bulwark of the superstitions and illusions of past ages.

* * * * *

Communities fall by the vices of the great, not the small. The French revolution is perpetually sounded in our ears, as a warning against the lawlessness of the people. But whence came their revo-

lution? Who were the regicides? Who beheaded Louis XVI.? You tell me, the Jacobins; but history tells a different tale. I will show you the beheaders of Louis XVI. They were Louis XIV., and the regent who followed him, and Louis XV. These brought their descendant to the guillotine. The priesthood who revoked the edict of Nantz, and drove from France the skill, and industry, and virtue, and piety, which were the sinews of her strength; the statesman who intoxicated Louis XIV. with the scheme of universal empire; the profligate, prodigal, shameless Orleans; and the still more brutalized Louis XV., with his court of panders and prostitutes;—these made the nation bankrupt, broke asunder the bond of loyalty, and overwhelmed the throne and altar in ruins. We hear of the horrors of the revolution; but in this as in other things, we recollect the effect without thinking of the guiltier cause. The revolution was indeed a scene of horror; but when I look back on the signs which preceded it, and which made Paris almost one great stew and gaming-house, and when I see altar and throne desecrated by a licentiousness unsurpassed in any former age, I look on scenes as shocking to the calm and searching eye of reason and virtue, as the 10th of August, and the massacres of September. Bloodshed is indeed a terrible spectacle; but there are other things almost as fearful as blood. There are crimes which do not make us start and turn pale, like the guillotine, but are deadlier in their workings. God forbid that I should say a word to weaken the thrill of horror with which we contemplate the outrages of the French revolution. But when I hear that revolution quoted, to frighten us from reform, to show us the danger of lifting up the depressed and ignorant mass, I must ask whence it came; and the answer is, that it came from the intolerable weight of misgovernment and tyranny, from the utter want of culture among the mass of the people, and from a corruption of the great, too deep to be purged away except by destruction. I am also compelled to remember, that the people, in this their singular madness, wrought far less woe than kings and priests have wrought, as a familiar thing, in all ages of the world. All the murders of the French revolution did not amount, I think, by one fifth, to those of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The priesthood and the throne, in one short night and day, shed more blood, and that the best blood in France, than was spilled by Jacobinism and all other forms of violence, during the whole revolution. Even the atheism and infidelity of France were due chiefly to a licentious priesthood and a licentious court. It was Religion, so called, that dug her own grave. In offering this plea for the multitude, I have no desire to transfer to the multitude uncontrolled political power. I look at power in all hands with jealousy. I wish neither the rich nor the poor to be my masters. What I wish is, the improvement, the elevation of all classes, and especially of the most numerous class, because the most numerous, because the many are mankind, and because no social progress can be hoped but from influences which penetrate and raise the mass of men. The mass must not be confined and kept down through a vague dread of revolution. A social order requiring such a sacrifice would be too dearly bought. No order should satisfy us, but that which is in harmony with universal improvement and freedom.

[The following extract from a well-written letter to a young man in this city, though not intended for the public eye, contains most excellent advice, which, if properly regarded by that class of the community to which he belongs, may be productive of much public benefit.]

"I hope you will permit me to use the freedom of friendship, and the prerogative of our former relation to each other, in setting down a few plain thoughts that may be of benefit to you.

"You are now at an age when every act and every thought will exert a controlling influence on your whole life. You are dependent upon your own exertions; almost 'solitary and alone.' But you have that within you which can raise you above every difficulty, if you would yield to its impulses. Aim at a high standard of excellence; if you fall short, you will not come nearer the mark by aiming lower. Franklin was a printer, not better educated than you. We cannot all be Franklins in fame and intellectual glory; but read his works, and you will find it easy to use the means which placed him on his lofty station, and which cannot fail to make you a good and a happy man, if not a powerful and famous one. Now is the time, too, when your mind is balancing itself for life, and forming fixed notions of *right* and *wrong*. If your *fancy* shows a disposition to fly away with your *judgment*, *clip its wings*. The 'cold realities' of life are better than the 'airy nothings' of imagination; and Paley's Philosophy, *well conned*, is of more benefit in strengthening the mind, than all the poetry ever written. I know you are closely confined to your business in the office; and your whole attention should be directed to please your employer. But you must have some seasons of leisure. Let not the time fleet by you unheeded; or, worse, spent in vicious amusements. Strive to impress each hour, as it passes, with an image that shall be a favorable witness hereafter. Be regular, temperate, and economical in your habits. Devote a fixed period every night to solid reading. Avoid novels and the gossamer productions of the day, as you would an infection. Shun every thing tending to infidelity. Though you and I have not felt the immediate and personal benefit of Christianity, when we look around at the good flowing from it to the civilized world, we must acknowledge its capability of benefiting us as individuals. Look at the needs and necessities of man. Every pang of grief tells him that he needs a helper; but infidelity provides none. Think well on the great objects of life, and, if you desire the end, use the means. I would write more, but want of space admonishes me to stop."

Every perversion of the law, and every fraud committed on it, in a country where the people have full power to remove all grievances by constitutional means, is high treason against the State. In countries where the laws are enacted by one class, and brought to operate against another, legal chicanery in self-defence may meet with some apology; but in the United States, it is utterly indefensible.—*Combe*.

A schoolmaster is a monarch, and, therefore, like other monarchs, responsible for the happiness of his subjects.

"I would rather," said Dr. Johnson, "have the rod to be the general terror to all, to make them learn, than to tell a child, if you do thus or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas, by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you will lay the foundations of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other."

In despotic governments it may suffice if a sufficient number of the people are educated to take care of the rest; but in a republic, where the sovereignty resides in all, all must be educated.

Some teachers will teach only from the books from which they themselves learned. This would create an hereditary descent of books, and the line would be immortal.

"It is happy for us when a being of noble sentiments and beneficent life enters our circle, becomes an object of interest to us, and by affectionate intercourse takes a strong hold on our hearts."

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

(Continued from page 224.)

SCHOOL ABSTRACTS.

The event most interesting, and bearing most directly upon the welfare of the schools, which has occurred within the last year, is the publication of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns, for the school year 1839-40, enriched, as it is, with selections from the school committees' reports. In relation to this volume, I have the declarations of many gentlemen, well qualified to judge, that they are unacquainted with any document, in any language, which would be so serviceable to our schools as this; or one which, hereafter, will possess a greater historical interest. The document is large,—larger than I intended it should be,—but as the printing of the work went on simultaneously with the making of the selections for it, it was impossible to foresee, at the beginning, what those selections would amount to, at the close; and when that amount was ascertained, it was necessarily too late for any abridgment. But there was an overruling consideration belonging to the subject, viz.: that the volume could not have been materially reduced in size, without being greatly diminished in value. It is also an important fact, that, as we have now ascertained the real condition of our schools, their errors and their defects, the necessity of preparing another so voluminous a document is superseded for the future.

Very exaggerated statements having gone abroad, last year, respecting the expense of clerk hire in the department of the Secretary of State, on account of assistance rendered, in preparing the Abstract of 1838-9, (a much smaller volume than the present,) I made an ar-

rangement this year, with Mr. Bigelow, the Secretary, by which this portion of the work, and all expense for stationery, in executing it, should be separated from the other expenses of his office, in order to show what was justly chargeable under this head. The result is, that the whole cost, both of clerk hire and stationery, is one hundred and fifty dollars only.

By the law of 1838, the Secretary of the Board of Education is required, annually, to visit each county in the State, "to collect information of the condition of the public schools, of the fulfilment of the duties of their office by all members of the school committees, and of the circumstances of the several school districts, in regard to all the subjects, of teachers, pupils, books, apparatus, and methods of education." Another law, of the same year, requires school committees "annually to make a detailed report of the condition of the several public schools, in their respective towns, designating particular improvements in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts or suggestions, in relation thereto, as, in their opinion, will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of said schools," and to transmit a copy of said reports to the department of State. These enactments, in connection with the publication, in the Annual Abstracts, of selections from those reports, constitute an era in the history of the Common Schools of Massachusetts. In no other State or country, so far as I am aware, is a train of measures pursued, so simple yet so effective, for diffusing information in regard to the schools, as we have now been pursuing in this Commonwealth for the last three years. In the first place, an agent is sent into each county in the State, to make a diligent and laborious tour of exploration. The results of his survey are then communicated to the Legislature, and by them are sent to every town, to every school committee, and to every school district. If these communications contain any general principles or suggestions, which are deemed worthy of consideration, the school committees and friends of education in the respective towns, explain their relevancy, and urge upon their fellow-citizens the adoption of practical measures to carry out the improvements suggested. The town school committees then make a "detailed" report, respecting the condition of the schools, in their own town, for the double purpose of informing their fellow-townsmen what that condition may be, and of transmitting that information to a common centre, where all their reports are collected. The first object,—that of informing their fellow-townsmen,—is accomplished, either by the reading of the report in open town meeting, or by printing it for general distribution among the inhabitants; and, in either case, by filing the original in the office of the town clerk, where it will be always open for reference. After copies of all the reports have been collected in one place, they are carefully examined; whatever is merely of a local and private character is omitted, because it still remains in the archives of the town whence it came, for the use of the inhabitants; but whatever is of general and permanent utility, is embodied in the Annual Abstract. And here the scattered rays of light, converged to a focus, become a sun. The Abstract is then distributed throughout the Commonwealth, and thus each town and each school committee, in return for its own contributions, receives the facts, views, suggestions, experience, reasonings, conclusions, of all the others in the

State. Knowledge which was local, becomes universal. Experiments which have failed, are not repeated. New methods and arrangements, which are found to work well, are adopted at once, and without the delay or the expense of a first discovery. A coincidence of testimony, as to supposed improvements or deficiencies, inspires confidence, and renders it easier to introduce a good practice in pursuance of a good theory, or to abolish evils that plead ancient usage for their continuance. Each committee-man and teacher looks upon himself, not as an isolated and solitary individual, toiling in an unknown and narrow sphere, but as a member of a great company, working for a common end ;—and this consciousness tends to invigorate each with the strength of all. Towns, too, which heretofore have been most indifferent to the cause, are aroused by the sight of what others are doing ; and are stimulated to exertion, if not by the noble desire of excellence, yet, at least, by the shame of conspicuous inferiority.

In various respects, the last two Abstracts are invaluable documents. Not only are facts of the greatest importance brought to light, but they come with an authority that cannot be gainsaid or questioned. A host of witnesses, of the greatest intelligence and respectability, without motive for exaggeration or opportunity for concert,—witnesses, residing respectively in all parts of the State, and whose collective knowledge, therefore, embraces the condition of all the schools within it,—offer, in these volumes, their well-considered testimony respecting one of the most important of all our institutions.

Although, therefore, the first report which I submitted to the Board, was mainly occupied with an exposition of the topics discussed in these two documents, yet the basis of facts was then so comparatively limited, and the weight of authority in support of them was so disproportionate to that which now exists, that I feel justified in going, substantially, over the same ground again,—hoping with these new materials to give greater clearness and expansion to the views there presented. Without the arrogance of supposing that I can prepare any thing so pertinent and judicious as many of the committees' reports are, yet it is obvious that some views will be presented to one who occupies a central eminence, which would be inevitably hidden from those whose position, though it gives them an opportunity for a clearer and closer inspection within a limited sphere, still shuts them out from a comprehensive survey of the entire field of operations. This is my apology for attempting, in this Report, a presentation of the topics which have already been treated of by the committees, in so able and admirable a manner.

It would seem desirable to exhibit some general outline of the objects proposed, and the principles observed, in the preparation of the last two Abstracts, before commenting in detail on the various subjects they discuss. For this purpose, I must refer the Board to the short reports prefixed to them, as the explanations there given, are as brief and apposite, as any thing I could now prepare.

(To be continued.)